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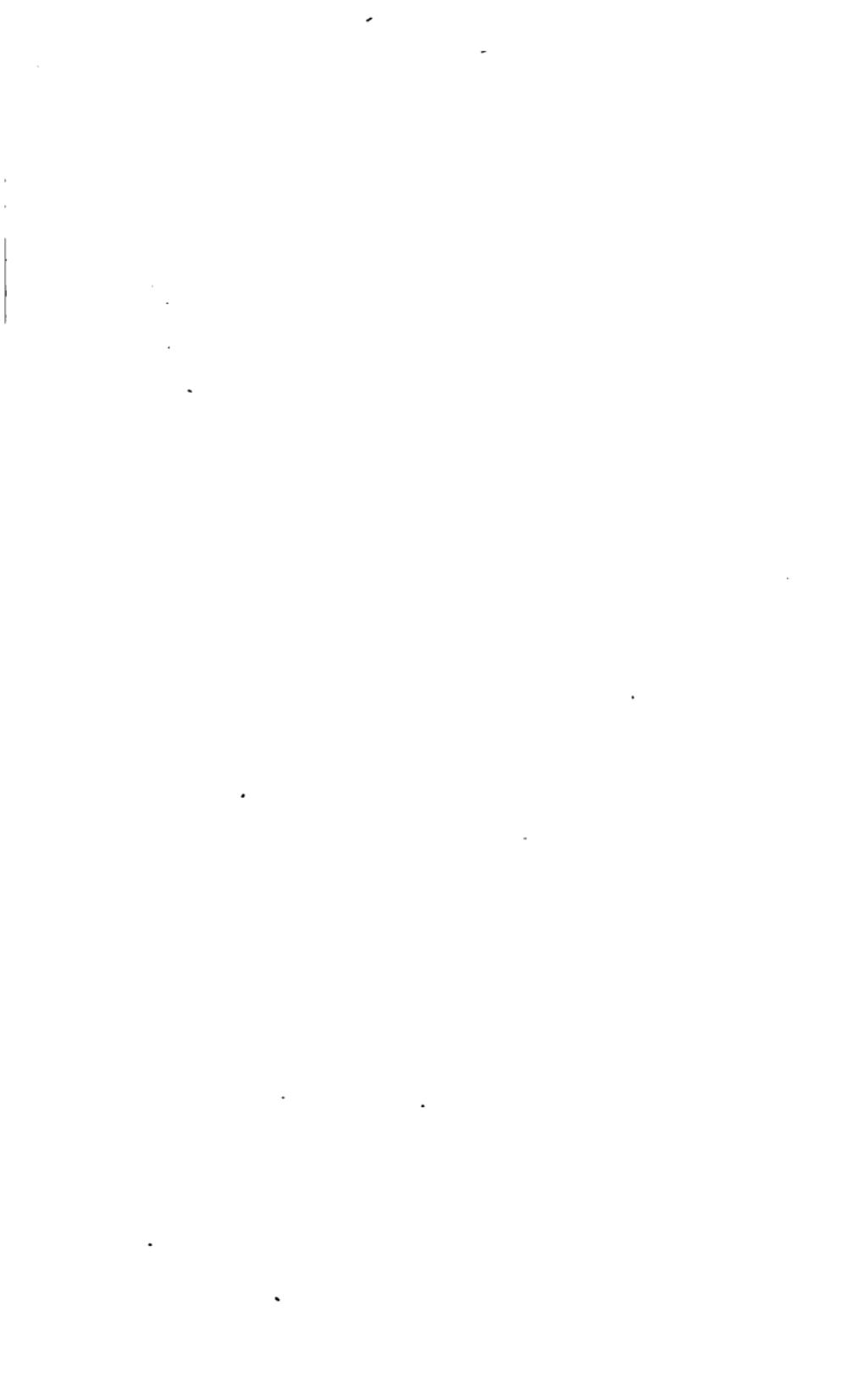
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THE COTTON-TREE;

OR,

EMILY,



THE LITTLE WEST INDIAN.

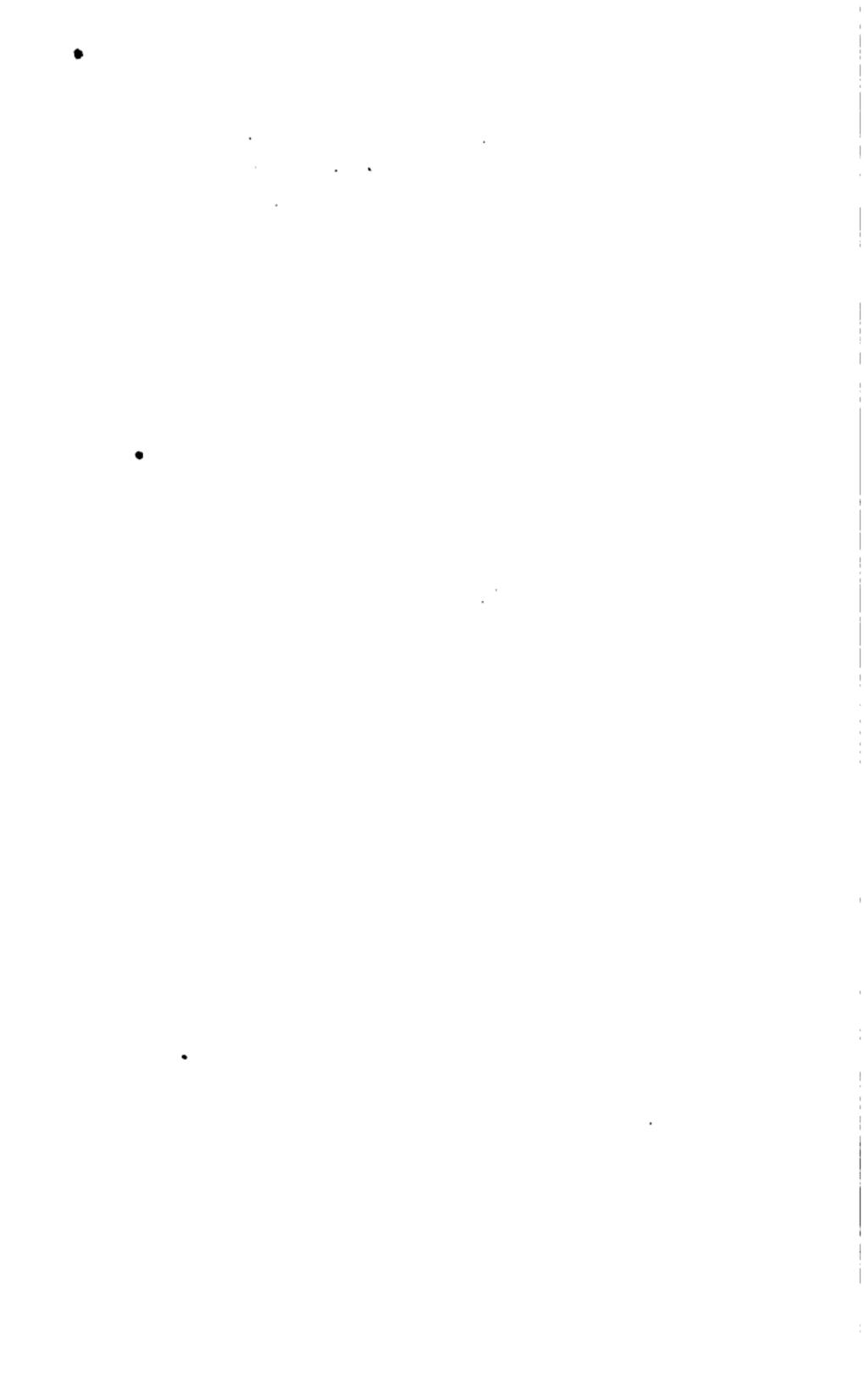
A TALE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY MRS. HENRY LYNCH.

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1847.



THE COTTON-TREE.

I WAS born in Jamaica, and my first recollections are those of a large shadowy house, a wide piazza, and kind black faces. Yes, little English reader, you may laugh ; but there are stars that cheer the traveller on the darkest heaven ; and there were smiles from these sable nurses that filled my infant heart with happiness.

For hours I would sit between the knees of my good “Nana,” as she told me some wild African legend, or related, in a “Nan-

cy story," with animated gesture, the spectral performances of some wonderful sprite.

But there are yet dearer memories than these gleaming in beauty, like the distant landscape through the mist of time.

The morning kiss !—Oh ! with what delight I gathered the blossom from the orange-tree, that I might give the pale flower to my dear mother ! and as I took my seat on the bed, I would playfully dress her locks in the bridal wreath. “ And who, my child,” she would say, “ bid those snowy blossoms shine amidst the dark

* A “ Nancy tale ” is what may be termed a ghost story, and is generally a metrical account of some superhuman power, chanted by the negro in a wild, low strain.

leaves? Who painted the pomegranate with its beautiful crimson? and who upholds those delicate lilies in strength, with the scorching summer around them, refreshing them with the silent dews of night? Is it not He, my love, who took little children in his arms and blessed them?"

I did not see much of my father, for he was engaged throughout the day; but I remember, like a distant dream, my first indistinct idea that sorrow dwelt amongst us.

My infant brother died.* And our

* It is customary amongst the negros to make noisy lamentations on the death of any member of the family. "My sister breathed her last," writes a lady, "and in an instant the room was crowded with people, some of whom I had never before seen; all were wringing their hands, assum-

negro servants made loud wailings ; and they changed his resting-place by my mother's side for a coffin, a narrow bed, and they strewed his infant form with flowers, and pressed his cold face with kisses. When I asked what sorrow was, my mother smiled sadly and said, "It is the friend of unbelief ; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then we know that those who sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him."

"Shall we see my brother again ?" I inquired.

"Yes ! when this mortal shall put on immortality," replied my mother, "then shall be brought to pass the saying which is writing my sorrow as their own, and in frantic gestures and loud cries, mourning the departed."

ten, Death is swallowed up in victory ; " and then they took our little one to a wild mountain grave, and we saw him no more.

I did not, at that time, fully understand all my mother's observations ; yet I have reason to believe, that her pious instructions were not altogether lost upon me ; for, even at that early age, I had an indefinable idea of the *safety* of those who died in the Lord.

Another pleasant memory, that I have of that early time, is our long evening drive to a beautiful old Cotton-Tree, which had, for many years, stood there in its giant beauty, looking on man from generation to generation, as he journeyed from the cradle to the tomb ! Yes, it was under the evening shadows of this pleasant

tree, that my mother filled my infant mind with its first thoughts of our Saviour's love. What deep emotion I felt, as she told me, in simple language, the history of the holy Jesus ! She dwelt much on the love of the Father in sending his Son to die for rebellious man. " And will you not, my child," she would say, " give the dew of the morning, your youth and strength, to one who has done so much for you ? "

It is true that, during the day, I did not think much of these conversations ; yet when the lengthening shades of evening reminded me that the hour for our drive was approaching, it was my custom to run into my mother's dressing-room, exclaiming, " O mamma, do go to the Cotton-tree, the beautiful Cotton-tree, and tell me some

more Bible stories." Thus unconsciously I began to feel an interest in sacred things ; and even at that time, a spark of love towards my Redeemer was kindled in my bosom, which, in after life, when the waves of temptation were rolling darkly, shone forth as a beacon-light, tremblingly indeed, but saving me from destruction and death.

Our homeward way lay by the riverside, where the feathery bamboos were bending in graceful beauty over the shadowy waters. In one place the stream, forcing its way over a low rocky barrier, greatly attracted my childish admiration, while every hue of the rainbow was mirrored in its silvery cascade.

Sometimes a gleam of crimson and gold would pierce through the tangled foliage,

and look more richly beautiful for the darkness that surrounded it : to use my mother's language, it was " like faith making even sorrow lovely."

And then the fireflies, the beautiful fireflies, they would rise in thousands around us, as if the stars had lost their way, and were flitting about on earth.

I well remember some lines, that my dear parent taught me on this occasion :—

THE FIREFLY.

Who makes the evening firefly gleam

Over the land so far ;

And bids it on the darkened earth,

Shine like a twinkling star ?

Who paints its emerald-tinted ray,

And on the twilight air,

Holds it in beauty all unknown

Whilst gorgeous day is there ?

Who bids it to the lowly vale,
Give forth its trembling light,
And brighten thro' the fitful gloom
The vapour-mantled night ?

He who, in distant spheres, upholds
The planets as they roll ;
Who stoops to guide the lowliest thing,
And loves the contrite soul !

The firefly's ray is like the hope
Faith sheds around the tomb ;
Clinging to darkness, giving light
That beautifies the gloom.

When we returned from our drive, my mother would prepare for dinner. I said my infant prayer at her knee ; and then creeping beneath the mosquito-net with which my little bed was carefully shielded, I slept till the first gleam of morning

roused my nurse from her slumbers, and she took me an early walk.

The distant mountains were wrapped in mist, which, as the sun rose from the crimson east, wore a thousand brilliant hues. Now they were clad in silver, now in gold, and now again they were dressed in the sober purple of the distant landscape. The nightingale, a happy little creature, was giving its lonely song to the morning ; for it does not, like its English namesake, keep its mellow notes only for the evening or midnight hour.

THE TROPICAL NIGHTINGALE.*

In the depth of the woods it hath tameless mirth,
And it pours forth its song on the morning earth ;

* The nightingale of Jamaica is the only singing bird in that island, its notes are sweet and

And the evening's breath as it wanders by,
Is fraught with the notes of its melody.

And loudly and clearly in joyous tone,
It breathes the anthem of praise alone ;
To no other bird is the sweet boon given,
The gift of song—'neath that tropic heaven.

It sings when evening hath shadowy birth,
When day's bright glory hath passed from earth,
The hymn of love, in its softest lay,
To the flower that waves in the moon's pale ray !

It speaks to the mourner, and bids arise,
From the lonely heart to the darkened skies,
A song of thanksgiving in grief to Him,
For the mercies still left, though life be dim !

melodious. Whence it has derived the appellation of nightingale, I know not, unless, indeed, its sweet song about sunset may give it some claim to that title. It is often called the mocking-bird.

We generally spent the hot months at a pleasant mountain residence ; and there, unshackled by the restraints of a town life, and enjoying a much larger portion of the society of my beloved mamma, my hours glided happily, though, alas ! too swiftly, down the current of time.

The front piazza was not enclosed by jalousies, as is usually the case in town ; and round some of the pillars, the beautiful wax-plant was wreathing its boughs, putting forth here and there its massive but elegant blossoms.

Others were completely covered by the luxuriant clasp of the wild jasmine ; and then again the Indian creeper would be seen, with its tiny crimson blossoms, modestly contributing its share of beauty to the decorations of the gallery.

The lawn around us, at this season of the year, was richly green, in consequence of the rain that fell on the mountains almost every afternoon at the same time ; and the tulip-tree, the scarlet-cordia, the delicate logwood, and the South Sea rose, gave much beauty to the little spot ; to say nothing of a thousand orange-trees, that filled the air with fragrance ; and the trumpet-leaved datura, that, like the sympathizing heart, reserved its deepest perfume for the darkened hour.

We had a shadowy walk too, where, long before the sun was set, I was allowed to play. Sometimes my mother would join me, bringing her work or a pleasant book.

The boughs of the grenadilla had completely covered the light trellis-work ;

and its large passion-flower would shine here and there, like a pale star through the green leaves that surrounded it.

We heard, softened by distance, the voices of the negros, as they worked in the vale below ; and the murmuring of the mountain stream, that, in an impetuous torrent, was forcing its way to the ocean. The rivers, indeed, at the rainy season, become so swollen, that it is dangerous, nay, sometimes impossible, to pass them. Bridges, in most places, are useless : they would be carried away by the strength of the rushing water. An experienced negro, however, can tell the precise moment when one may venture to drive or ride through the river ; and it really would be no uninteresting scene to an English

eye to see ladies on horseback, pale with terror, tremblingly giving up the reins to their sable guides ; and the wild unconcern and noisy glee of the children, who, on the shoulders of some trusty African, are carried in triumph through the tide.

The gullies, or mountain torrents, are still more dangerous. I remember going with my dear mamma to pay a visit to a friend in the Lowlands. We set off long before sunrise : the sky was clear and cloudless, and part of our way lay through one of those gully-tracks, at this time a dry, sandy hollow. When we returned in the evening, the sky was still unclouded, the sun was calmly sinking in the golden west, and again we drove into the gully, without a thought of storm or rain. When we were

in the midst of it, we heard the 'sound as of many waters ;' and in a moment, the mud-stained torrent was rushing upon us. The terrified horses began to kick and plunge ; the driver was alarmed : my mother, with admirable presence of mind, took the whip from his hands, and urged the frightened animals up the slippery bank. Another instant, and we were safe ; and as we looked back on our danger, and saw what had so lately been dry ground converted into a mighty stream, bearing down large trees to the ocean, we raised our hearts in thankfulness to Him, who, even whilst showing forth his power, delighteth in mercy.

Before October, we were again settled in town ; and as Christmas approached, Mrs.

Wilson, an old friend of my mother's, came to pay us a visit.

She was an English lady, who had estates in our little island, and was now arranging about their sale, purposing, in a few months, to return to England. She was tall, thin, and pale, with an elegant figure, and a stylish manner which caused her society to be much sought after; but she lacked the smile of kindness, the gentle look of forbearing affection, to which I had, through life, been accustomed. She laughed unmercifully at my Creole accent; for, although my mother had taken pains to keep me from what is called, amongst West Indians, "talking negro," yet, there was a languor and drawl in my manner of speaking, which drew from her

the most cutting sarcasms. She had, however, been the early friend and school-fellow of my mother, therefore I tried to think kindly of her ; and at night, bending over my little bed, my dear mother would tell me how I must patiently bear reproof, if I wished, in sincerity, to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.—Thus tranquilly passed the happy years of my early childhood.

But a trial was now approaching, of the nature of which you, my little English reader, can form no just conception. I mean the time was drawing nigh when I was to be separated, not for weeks or months, but for years, from my beloved parents.

Mrs. Wilson was to return in the spring

to England. The opportunity for my departure, under her care, was considered too good to be lost ; and it was accordingly arranged that I should accompany her. At first I entreated my parents to let me stay with them only a little longer ; but seeing that my importunity caused my mother yet deeper grief, I learned to be silent.

I was to have remained at home till I had attained my fifteenth year; for it was to a *finishing school*, as it is termed, that my mother wished to send me : and as my thirteenth birthday had only just passed, I could not, all at once, reconcile my mind to a separation, which hitherto I had been accustomed to look on as a distant sorrow.

To attempt to describe the intensity of my suffering at this time would be impossible : the whole world seemed changed, and the fair face of nature scarcely any longer attracted my admiration.

I thought the bright sunshine could not sympathize with my sorrow : the flowers were beautiful as ever, none drooped for my grief: but my little chamber witnessed tears, bitter tears, that seemed to bear away the strength from life.

But there was one untaught but affectionate being, on whose faithful breast I poured the stream of my childhood's grief—my negro nurse ! Well do I remember how she would sit on the ground by my side, and in her own peculiar way endeavour to comfort me.

“Hi! my missis, my sweet young missis,” she would say, “Da whorra dem tears for? big hot tears too: Nana no lub see dem. Remember, Massa Jesus Christ, him suffer worser; and young missis no must hab trouble too? Tan’ patience, my sweet missis; please God you come back again, fine, handsome pickney, and cleber too, and then no more cry:”—always ending her advice with some striking simile, so customary amongst this simple people: “Rain make flower sweeter, not kill dem!”—meaning, that my present trial should purify, and not overwhelm my young heart.

At this time very frequent were my drives with my mother, to the beautiful Cotton-Tree. It seemed as though a halo of love beautified her every word, her

every action. To be at her side, was to be breathing the very atmosphere of affection ; and in spite of the cloud of anticipation, that rested so darkly on my young spirit, I was always soothed and comforted by her conversation. She would tell me of her own early life, and how the sorrow of parting from her parents had been a messenger of mercy to her, leading her to think of the unchanging and ever-present Father and Friend.

“ My Emily,” she would say, “ you have heard of Jesus, and I trust, in some measure, you have learnt to love him. Hitherto he has been to you like the bright and morning star on a cloudless sky ; now if you continue to seek Him, He will reveal Himself to you in other characters : as your

Rock of refuge in danger, your Shield in sorrow's storm, and your unfailing Guide in the difficulties which must sometimes surround you. Only trust Him, and when your father and mother are far from you, the Lord will take you up."

In this way she continued to impress on my mind a sense of the sufficiency that was in Christ Jesus ; and in after life, much of this precious advice would, in the hour of temptation, come back on my heart with convincing and restraining power.

It was after one of these evening conversations, during which we had been noticing the extreme sultriness of the weather, that we were startled from our sleep at midnight, by the severe shock of

an earthquake. The house literally trembled in the grasp of the Almighty, and then all was quiet. Rushing like a frightened bird to my mother's side, there I stood, till a cool, pleasant breeze came whispering through the stillness. I shall never forget her pale calm face, as, kissing my forehead she gently said, " God is our Refuge and Strength ; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

From the nature of my father's occupation, my mother was much in society ; yet, endued with power from on high, amidst temptations and trials, with a lowly and contrite heart, she walked humbly with her God. The law of kindness dwelt

on her lips, sorrow ever found in her a sympathising friend, and when the needy saw her, they blessed her. Indeed she lived as seeing Him who is invisible ; and appeared to enjoy no common share of communion with the Master whom she loved and served. “ And there is a sweet promise,” my love, she said, as I was returning to my little bed, still somewhat terrified at the earthquake, “ there is a text of comfort, which you must take as a soothing draught, and it will lull you into pleasant sleep : ‘ The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.’ ”

But the day of my departure was rapidly approaching, and for the last time I went with my mother to the pleasant shade of the Cotton-tree.

She was unusually silent during the drive, and once or twice I saw she was engaged in mental prayer. After we had been for some time seated beneath the pleasant shade, she drew me close to her side, and with a look of inexpressible tenderness she said, "Emily, my child, have we not had hours of sweet communion here ? have not our faith and love been strengthened, and have not our hearts burned within us, as we made mention of the Saviour ? O, my Emily," she continued, "you will soon be far from the watchful care of a parent ; but the good

Shepherd will not forsake his own, he will encircle you with the arms of his love !

“ It is in your power,” she added, her voice trembling, and her dear cheeks growing paler than usual from deep emotion ; “ it is in your power abundantly to repay me for the care I have bestowed on your infancy.

“ You will return in a few years, and I may be no longer on earth . . . Nay, grieve not, my beloved, she said ; “ if the Father bid the wandering child rest her weary head on his bosom, would you mourn ? Oh, no ; but for the living must be our thoughts. And now promise me,” she added, in a voice of deep solemnity, whilst a heavenly expression rested on her face, “ beneath the shade of this spreading Cotton-tree, that

has witnessed the sweet counsel we have taken together—promise me, that when I am no longer here, you will speak to your father of holy things ; promise me, that you will ask him to turn to your mother's God for comfort. Tell him how, in earnest prayer, I have wrestled for him ; tell him, though it may be at eventide, I know he will be called into the fold."

When my feelings would allow me to speak, I promised to do as she desired ; and then we knelt together, and O, with what fervour she prayed for the husband of her youth, the father of her precious Emily, for him whose love was the sweetener of her life, whose smile was the sun-light of her pilgrimage !

It seems to me but as yesterday, that

solemn evening. The ocean was crimsoned with sunset. Two or three bats, were flitting across the dusky sky, and a soft golden light played with the tangled boughs of our old Tree.

As we descended the path, that led to the carriage, "Look up!" my mother said: "the first faint star of evening is gleaming there: it has witnessed your promise; and it shall yet look down on you, as in this very place you tell your beloved father all that passed this evening."

I felt a sort of indefinite idea, that some important trust had been committed to me; but the arrangements for my voyage soon occupied my childish mind.

I was very fond of knitting; and my mother furnished me with a little bag,

well stored with worsteds of many colours ; for any occupation, she said, would serve to amuse me on board ship.

I had, I recollect, a tin-box, laden with oranges, cakes, and sweet-meats of various kinds : but all was sadness to me. The parting presents received from my friends I viewed as so many screens, that were vainly endeavouring to hide my misery from me ; and when I rested my head on my father's shoulder for the last time, when I received the parting kiss from that tender mother's lips, which were cold as marble, and felt the pressure of her chilly hand, my young heart was indeed overwhelmed, my spirit was ready to faint within me.

I will not dwell on the horrors of sea-

sickness ; nor on the wretchedness that I experienced at the commencement of this new era of my existence. My mother was no longer near me ; and in the darkness of my despair, I could not pray for comfort.

To those who have never suffered thus, the peculiar nature of my feelings on religious subjects at this time would be indescribable.

I seemed to be at a greater distance from my Saviour, now that my beloved mother was no longer near me ; and when I read my daily chapter in the morning, the very sight of my mother's Bible caused my tears to flow.

Mrs. Wilson was gentle in her manner to me, indulging my wayward fancies, far more than I had anticipated.

In calm weather I would sit on deck with my knitting ; but busy memory was ever at work, painting the early happy scenes of my childhood : and the evenings under the Cotton-tree were not the least prominent in the faithful picture.

I gave way to a spirit of discontent and repining, mistaking it for a natural sorrow ; and I was ever busy imagining myself a most unhappy being, and comparing my lot with that of more fortunate English children.

But the voyage was now over, and Mrs. Wilson took me to her home. We landed in the month of May, and the beauty of the scene almost lured me for a while from the selfishness of my grief.

Mrs. Wilson's pleasant home was situated

in the rich and beautiful county of Devon. The first glimpse I had of the house was through an avenue of fine old elm-trees. It was built in the cottage style ; and a lawn, covered with turf, richer and softer than any I had yet seen, surrounded the pleasant dwelling. The grass was decorated by small but elegant little silvery flowers, which I afterwards learnt were called daisies.

Mrs. Wilson's daughters received me kindly ; and on their asking me some questions about Jamaica, I burst into tears, and wept so bitterly, that it was long ere I had courage to look on the strange new scenes and faces around me.

I was soon left alone, and the first thing that attracted my attention was the pecu-

liar fragrance of the sweet-briars, that surrounded the low French windows, and filled the room with their perfume.

That flowery tree, too, with its golden ringlets dancing in the sun : what could it be ? It was a laburnum : and although I know something of the lilac, in our tropic land, still that which now breathed its sweetness around me was of a stronger and richer kind ; and, strange as it may seem, the very sight of all these beautiful but unknown flowers filled my heart with an oppressive sense of desolation.

It was arranged that I was to sleep in a small but pleasant attic with the house-keeper, a faithful domestic, who had been long in Mrs. Wilson's service.

Oh ! what real anguish of heart I felt,

when kneeling in the silence of my chamber I asked my Saviour to protect and bless me. I have before mentioned, that I felt as if at a distance from my God, my very sorrows seemed to rise before me, as a dark curtain, hiding my soul from the light of his countenance.

I did not, at that time, know the cause of all this. I did not know, that my poor feeble will was impiously at war with the will of its Maker ; I had yet to learn, that before the stricken heart can receive one gleam of true comfort, one smile of love from its Redeemer, it must lie lowly at the foot of the Cross ; but, blessed be God, he does not leave us to ourselves ; he leads us by paths that we know not, till he brings us to the desired haven.

I shed many tears on this first night of my arrival, and then, wrapping my heart in the dreary mantle of its sorrow, I fell asleep.

THE STRANGER CHILD.

I know your land is bright and fair,
A thousand sunny flowers
Are giving freshness to the air,
And beauty to the bowers ;
And by the pleasant woodland strain,
From memory half beguiled,
Joy steals into the heart again
Of the lonely stranger child !

And beautiful your setting sun
Strews golden light around ;
And night itself comes stealing on
With silvery moonlight crowned.
Then thoughts of distant happy hours,
When life's bright morning smiled,
Of whispering palms, of orange bowers,
Rest on the stranger child !

God of the lonely, hear my prayer ;
A hiding-place thou art,
A Father present everywhere ;
O, soothe the yearning heart !
And though dim shadows round me rise,
Deem not my sorrow wild ;
While thus, beneath far alien skies,
I dwell a stranger child !

I soon became in a measure accustomed to my new friends ; though I mourned for the love that I had lost, with a sense of desolation that I can find no words to express.

My time, at present, was much at my own disposal, and I would sit for hours on a small root-seat on the quiet lawn, beneath the shade of a gigantic elm, imagining myself a most wretched being ; and although I was not altogether without a

sense of dependence on God, yet I did not, in any way, look to him for comfort. I would pray, that is, I would pour out my sorrows before him ; and I took especial delight in appropriating to my own particular circumstances, all those texts of a mournful tendency, which I imagined expressly painted my grief : " My heart within me is desolate ; I go mourning all the day long," &c.

Mrs. Wilson's daughters were very fond of society, and when they were not from home, there were many visitors at the house, so that I was left very much to the companionship of the old housekeeper.

She was a worldly-minded, but very agreeable woman ; and often would she amuse me by her tales of the olden time,

when ladies wore powder in their hair, and hoops in their petticoats.

I, in return, would tell her something from the short past of my little life, and she would express much interest when I described the fruits and flowers of my tropical home ; but when I spoke of my mother as a sweet and gentle creature, under the influence of a religion that made the present life joyful with a glorious hope of immortality, she only shrugged her shoulders and said, it seemed to her, that the Methodists were a moping set, and that I was the most miserable child on the face of the earth. Thus had I, already, by my inconsistent conduct, done harm to that blessed cause, in itself altogether lovely and of good report.

After the midsummer vacation it was arranged, that I should go to a boarding-school, about two miles from Exeter. This establishment was carried on by Madame de Souffrain, an English lady, the wife of a French Protestant, who taught the young ladies the language of his own country.

The very name of school filled my inexperienced heart with terror ; and, after a pleasant journey, when they told me the dreaded building was actually in sight, I thought I should have fainted.

We entered the iron-gates. The circular lawn was enclosed by a neatly-trimmed shrubbery, and a broad gravel-walk led immediately to the house.

We were ushered into a handsome draw-

ing-room, and Madame de Souffrain received us most politely. She was a handsome lady, although somewhat passed the meridian of life. She wore a massive gold chain, and a dark velvet head-dress : her cheeks were red, and her appearance somewhat masculine. Nevertheless she smiled kindly on me, asked me some questions concerning my distant home, which made my tender heart beat, as if it were struggling to escape from its prison-house ; and then, without waiting for an answer, she began to arrange with Mrs. Wilson, the alterations necessary for my wardrobe.

In a short time everything was settled and I, who, a few weeks ago, had thought my cup of sorrow full to the brim, now

wept my adieu to Mrs. Wilson, as if some new woe had fallen on me.

I was a diffident, bashful child, and I suffered much from the scrutiny of the girls when I was introduced into the school-room. Many of them were sitting at a long table, some working, some writing, and the younger ones dressing their dolls. “ And how do you like England ?” “ Was the voyage long ?” with a thousand questions of the same nature, were poured on my ear.

They laughed when I spoke ; and I felt the blush of shame mount to my forehead when I discovered that my Creole accent was the cause of their merriment. I soon found they were luring me to talk, only that they might find new cause for mirth

in the novel style of speech that I had so unwittingly introduced among them.

I could stand this no longer, and, in an indignant tone I told them, that children from the country they affected to despise, would not behave in so rude a manner ; that they would not thus laugh at a stranger. Upon this, some of the young ladies asked me, if I thought I had my little slaves around me, that I spoke thus hastily ; and made many bitter observations, which were silenced only by the entrance of Madame de Souffrain.

I soon became initiated in school discipline ; and being naturally of a docile disposition, I had not many more disputes with my companions.

One little girl asked me most innocently,

if my father were a negro ; and Madame herself expressed astonishment at the fairness of my complexion, as she thought one born in the West Indies must necessarily wear the shadow of Africa's sable daughters.

My companions would sometimes reproach me for what they termed my childishness, laughing at the affectionate way in which I spoke of my dear mother ; so that by degrees I learnt to mention this precious name less frequently, and my sorrow was confined to my own heart. None knew the tender memories that clouded my young spirit ; no human eye saw the tears that steeped my pillow ; but One there was, even at that time, though I knew it not, looking down on me in watchful love ;

One unwearying in care, and tender in pity
to a wayward, unthankful child.

I was considered diligent in my studies, and in a little while I had made some proficiency in French and music ; but very often, when I had really taken pains with my exercise, my carelessness was blamed : and for my mother's smile of encouragement, and whispered word of praise at such a time, what would I not have given ?

Sometimes at night, I would think of that dear parent's holy counsel, till my heart was softened, and I prayed, really prayed that the Holy Spirit would draw me back to Him from whom I felt I had sadly wandered.

We regularly went to church twice on

Sunday ; and Madame de Souffrain carefully examined us in our Catechism. We learnt the Collects, and sometimes a portion of the Epistle or Gospel, and then, during the evening, we were allowed to ramble about the large playground, at the back of the house.

This was tastefully interspersed with laurel-trees, and the walls were concealed by a thick shrubbery, which was guarded by a flower-bed, at this time of the year, just beginning to wear its loveliest dress ; for the many-hued roses of summer were bursting into fragrant life.

Once or twice on a low seat which I had placed for myself, in a favourite corner of the green, I endeavoured, on this holy day, to read portions from my pocket Bible ;

but the sneers of my companions, or the more painful rebukes of those who told me not thus to make a display of religion, soon caused me to give up the practice ; and though a still small voice seemed to whisper, " Is not this being ashamed of Jesus ? " yet I tried to stifle the inward monitor by vain efforts to convince myself, that had I persevered in reading, I might have induced many to believe I was a hypocrite, and thus have injured the cause of my God.

The holidays approached ; but as Mrs. Wilson and her daughters were in Paris, there could be no change for me, and as I watched the happy children, half wild with delight at the prospect of so speedy a meeting with their parents, I thought my over-

wrought heart would break : " O, my mother," I would exclaim when I was alone, " how could you send me from you ! " I had not learnt that my earthly affections needed this check, that I might be compelled, as it were, to lean on my Saviour.

The summer meadow needs rain as well as sunshine ; the grape must be crushed ere it yield the luscious wine ; the flower must be broken ere it give its sweetest fragrance ; and man, rebel man, must bear the chastening of his God ere he bring forth fruit unto holiness.

During the holidays I was left much alone ; the playground was my place of continual resort. Sometimes I busied myself in comparing my lot with that of my schoolfellows, who were now, I imagined,

enjoying a very large share of happiness at home ; forgetting, that till the soul become reconciled to its Redeemer, it cannot taste, even under prosperous circumstances, real peace, but is like the troubled stream with sunshine above it, and flowers on its banks, discoloured and obnoxious from the impurity that lies beneath.

Then I would, in imagination, place my dear mother and my schoolmistress side by side ; and as the latter gained nothing by this position, I fancied myself very miserable, till the chime of the village bells, as, softened by distance, it floated on the evening air, found me quite ready to mingle a shower of tears with their soothing melody.

During this time, I had never raised one

real prayer for *comfort*, I had never in sincerity and humility asked for resignation to the will of my Father and my God.

My evenings were generally spent in the company of Monsieur and Madame de Souffrain. I was allowed to partake of the tea and hot muffin, at their little rosewood table ; and sometimes, when the old gentleman was particularly complaisant, he would interest me greatly, by telling me of his early sufferings in France. He would relate to me how he had been deprived of his property ; and how, being rigorously imprisoned, he had contrived to make his escape. More than once I induced him to tell me how, during the gloom of a dark winter's night, he had let himself down by the means of sheets and blankets from

a small high window ; and, in the disguise of a market-woman, had found his way to Calais. There, with his basket of eggs, he had been quietly allowed, with some others, to cross the Channel, at the Straits of Dover, and thus to regain that liberty which was dearer to him than life itself.

It was on one of these summer evenings that Madame told me I was shortly to have a companion, as Lucille Bowring, an orphan girl of fourteen, was, in a few days, to be placed under her care.

“ She lost her father, who was in the army,” continued Madame, “ when she was very young. Her widowed mother died last year, leaving this young creature with a decrepid and very aged grandmother. Her guardian, therefore, determined to send her to me.

“I am told she is gentle, and at times even cheerful ; and as all who know her become attached to her, she will, I doubt not, in some degree be a comfort to you.”

Now, so strange is the nature of the human heart, that when I retired this evening to my garden corner, I endeavoured to fence my feelings, as it were, *against this intrusion* of comfort, cherishing my sorrowful thoughts with much delight, and then triumphing in the idea, that till I again returned to my distant home, I must be miserable.

It is true, I had many trials : I was far from the land of my childhood, from the friends of my early life ; with my beloved parents I could no longer take sweet counsel ; and the cold carelessness of my young

companions deeply wounded my too sensitive heart.

Nevertheless, there were consolations provided for me at that time, if I would have stretched forth the hand of faith to receive them. There is comfort in Christ Jesus, for every situation in life. There are hopes like stars, made to give radiance to darkness, and precious promises to the broken in heart, that, like light flowers, give forth their fragrance to the gloom.

Early in the next week a gentleman arrived, leading by the hand our young orphan. She was in deep mourning; and one of those delicate and lovely children, whose every thought is painted on the varying cheek. Her very light hair hung in natural ringlets round her snowy neck; and

as she timidly raised her eyes to mine, sparkling through tears, they reminded me of the violet, glowing in morning dew ; for they were not altogether blue, but seemed to have something of the deeper hue of that lovely flower.

To all the questions put to her, she answered mildly and respectfully ; and her smile brought such dimples into her cheeks, and gave such an expression of almost infantine beauty to her mouth, that one could not help regretting it died away so soon.

She turned very pale, when her guardian rose, to take his leave. He kissed her affectionately, and I thought he whispered of a never-failing friend.

Already, I felt my heart drawn towards this gentle stranger ; for had not the

shadow of an orphan's woe in a measure fallen on my path ?

I was allowed to take the sweet child to our playground. "Lucille," I said, gently taking her hand, "shall I show you my garden-chair ?" for there is a freemasonry amongst young spirits, and the intercourse of childhood is unshackled by those restraints with which etiquette binds society in after life.

"This is my favourite seat," I continued; "from this spot I can hear the pleasant sound of the church bells; and sometimes the blackbird's song is loud."

"But why are you here, during the holidays ?" inquired Lucille. "I thought that only those who were deprived of *home*" —for she had not courage to mention the

name of mother—"remained at school, during this pleasant time." I then explained to her, that the home of my childhood was separated from me by the trackless ocean ; and as I spoke of my own dear parents, she rested her fair brow confidingly on my shoulder, and wept a shower of tears in refreshing rain; for she seemed soothed and comforted after this expression of her sorrow.

She joined our little tea-party, and appeared grateful for the slightest attention.

There was a peculiar expression of sweetness, mixed with something that was not sadness, on her lovely face, and though I did not then know it, young as she was, the Saviour had called her to him, put his hands on her, and blessed her.

Oh it is sweet to see the confidence of early youth, leaving its weakness, its helplessness, and its childish sorrows all with Him, who even as a father pitith his children, pitith them that fear him !

There is no doubt but that Lucille was naturally blest with a sweet and gentle disposition ; and now that her sinful nature was renewed by the power of divine grace, her character was peculiarly attractive.

The first Sunday that we spent together, she brought her Bible to our seat, with a book of hymns, and when I asked her to read to me, she modestly, and in a somewhat tremulous voice, read the eighth chapter of the Romans, whispering to me, that this was one of her mother's favorite

portions of scripture ; thus, for the first time, mentioning that dear name. And now that she had unlocked the secret current of her thought to me, she spoke affectionately and sweetly of that tender parent ; telling me how she had, whilst reading this chapter, impressed on the infant mind of her child the blessedness of those who, living in Christ, could not come under condemnation. "Under any circumstances," continued Lucille, "my mother would tell me, that the child of God, the heir of eternal life, might be happy ; and do you not think, Emily," she said, "that sorrowful children, such as we are, may have peace, yea, joy, full of glory ?"

I was astonished, I was confounded. Lucille's appearance was almost infan-

tine, owing perhaps to the natural simplicity of her character. Her hat had fallen back, and, only suspended by the ribbon, was resting on her shoulders : her long fair hair was floating on her neck ; and as she looked upwards in the quiet confidence of childhood, with the beauty of holiness glistening on every feature, “Surely,” I thought, “of such is the kingdom of heaven;” Verily, O my Father, ‘out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast ordained strength.’”

Now Madame de Souffrain, under a somewhat haughty exterior, and with a stern manner, which was no doubt occasionally assumed, for the better carrying into effect school discipline, possessed what is generally called a kind heart ; that is,

she was willing to oblige when no retrenchment of her own comfort was to be the sacrifice. In compliance with our earnest entreaties, it was therefore arranged, that Lucille and I were to be sharers of the same bedroom ; this was a real blessing to me, and in the retirement of that little chamber, many a lesson of holy instruction did I receive from that young disciple.

There was so much diffidence and humility about Lucille, that she never ventured to give me advice ; indeed the dear child seemed scarcely to know how closely she was walking with her God ; though I have no doubt she felt the security and peace which is ever the portion of those who live in communion with their Saviour.

At night she would frequently remind me of the blessings we enjoyed : " Emily," she would say, " have we not many mercies ? These warm rooms, these comfortable beds ? O we must not murmur ! "

At other times, when she saw me giving way to a discontented or repining spirit, she would gently and sweetly remind me of the sufferings of the early Christians, how they counted not their lives dear unto them, but rejoiced that they were reckoned worthy to suffer for the sake of their Saviour, contrasting our own more favoured circumstances with theirs : and never did this young creature awake in the morning without breathing forth the voice of thanksgiving to her Maker and Preserver.

I think I see her now, in her white muslin cap, sitting in her dressing-gown at the bedside, and repeating some such simple hymn as the following :—

Gracious Saviour, hear me !
Through the coming day,
Father ! be thou near me,
Watching o'er my way,
Though a weak and sinful child of dust,
Yet I lean on thee in faith and truth.

On life's early dawning
Thou hast sweetly smiled
Through the stormy morning
On thy lonely child,
And I bless thee now, through grateful tears
For thy love, the sunlight of my years.

On the orphan's sadness,
Thou hast shed a ray,
Throwing softened gladness
On the soul's dismay,

Speaking of thyself as Father—Friend—
The faithful one, enduring to the end.

Saviour, now I sing thee
Childhood's grateful hymn ;
Help me, Lord, to bring thee
Praise when life grows dim ;
In youth, in age I ask but for thy love,
To shed on life the glory from above !

But the summer vacation was over, and the young ladies had all returned. In a day or two, everything went on again in the same routine as if no holidays had separated us. Lucille became yet fonder of me ; and so timid was her disposition, that sometimes she appeared almost afraid to leave my side.

We were soon called “ The Methodists ; ” and when we brought our books into the

playground on Sunday evening, reproach seemed to deepen into anger.

“ What !” said one of the young ladies, to the gentle Lucille, “ do you mean to tell us that you are better than we are ? You are a little hypocrite ; and some day, you will be put to shame.” The first part of this speech appeared wholly unintelligible to the dear child ; but at its conclusion, she meekly said, “ Oh no ; they that trust in Him shall never be put to shame :” thus unwittingly giving a reply, that silenced her accuser.

On another Sabbath evening, we had put aside our books, and were walking in the shrubbery ; Lucille had been showing me her mother’s miniature ; but seeing Miss Haywood approaching us, my gentle

friend hastily replaced the treasure in her bosom. "I am glad, that you are, at last, afraid of pretending to be so good," said this hardened young lady, addressing Lucille. "At any rate, I see you try to hide your Bible." Lucille, not comprehending her meaning, replied with a sweet smile, "Oh no, I have not my Bible with me;" adding with unusual animation,

"Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
Let midnight blush to own a star."

"Oh, you little sinner!" answered Miss Haywood, in the loud tone of irritated feeling: "I shall tell Madame, that she does not know you. You add falsehood to deception; I can *prove* that you have been hiding your Bible;" and so saying,

she rudely drew the miniature from its resting-place on Lucille's neck.

I shall never forget the crimson hue, that for a moment overspread the cheeks of this young creature, and then yielded to a deathlike paleness. I thought she would have fainted. "Miss Haywood," I angrily said, "you envy Lucille, because you cannot be like her, and you have no right to treat her in this way." But Lucille had hastened from us, and when I found her in our bedroom, no trace of agitation was visible on her calm countenance. "I have been praying, my Emily," she said, "that I may not only speak as usual to Miss Haywood, but that my feelings towards her may be those of kindness. My gentle mother used to tell me, that the

very atmosphere of religion was love. “Emily,” she continued, whilst her gentle eyes filled with tears, “your affection for me, must not lead you to forget the blessed Saviour’s injunction to one who sought to defend him: ‘Put thy sword into thy sheath. Think you not, if I prayed to the Father, he could presently send me more than twelve legions of angels? but thus it must be now.’ Yes, dear Emily, we too could be defended from the strife of tongues, if such were our Father’s will; but it is necessary for us, that we should bear this chastening.”

She was soon engaged in conversation about her mother; and when summoned by the tea-bell to join our companions, I should have thought Lucille had forgotten

all that had passed in the shrubbery, had it not been for the peculiar tone of kindness in which, when obliged to speak, she addressed Miss Haywood, who really looked as if she felt herself in the wrong.

From this time, no more direct attacks were made on our proceedings ; and we were allowed in the garden corner unmolested to read the Holy Scriptures.

Our time passed on with very little change, till the autumn of the fourth year of our residence in England.

I had twice spent the summer holidays with Mrs. Wilson ; but as Lucille, the gentle, affectionate Lucille, did not accompany me, I did not enjoy these visits.

Mrs. Wilson complimented me on my improved appearance ; said, that I was very

tall for a girl of my age ; adding, that I promised to be as handsome as my mother. She then spoke of the importance of a strict attention to accomplishments, as they were necessary, she said, for the *establishment* of a young lady in Jamaica ; by which I understood she meant *marriage* ; and when I told her it was my wish never to leave my dear mother, she smiled sarcastically, and bid me ask her girls what they thought of this matter.

With unmixed pleasure, I returned to Lucille, who appeared to have been forgotten by all her relatives, but blessed in an especial manner by no small share of communion with her Saviour.

It was a rich summer evening in the beginning of August, when I returned to

Madame de Souffrain. Lucille met me with a beaming smile ; for the happiness of others had ever been to her a source of unmixed joy. "I have news for you," she said, after the first salutations were over ; "pleasant, happy news, dear Emily ; a letter from your far-off home :" for this dear child, utterly alone in the world as she was, had so completely imbibed the spirit of her Master, that she was ever ready to rejoice with those that rejoiced, forgetting, in the unselfishness of her renewed nature, her own desolate situation in the happiness of another.

With a throbbing heart, I hastily tore open the letter. But how doth the gold change, the fine gold become dim ! With anguish of spirit, I read of the illness of my

beloved mother : as I proceeded with the letter, my father gently and tenderly called upon me to mingle my tears with his, for that my dear parent was dead ! . . . How I hastened to my room I know not ; but in an intense agony of mind, inexpressible indeed in words, but known to those who have thus suffered, I threw myself upon my bed ; and I am convinced, that had I cried unto the Lord for comfort, He would have been true to his promise, " Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee !" But, alas ! I could only, in the bitterness of my grief, exclaim, " Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow ? " and my soul refused to be comforted.

I can never forget the gentle attentions of the amiable Lucille during this time of

darkness. Madame at first condoled with me ; but she soon grew weary of my unabated grief. The young ladies, impelled by curiosity, came to look at me. Lucille alone was unwearied in her efforts to soothe me ; and faithfully but gently, she strove to check the murmurings of my wayward heart.

I was attacked by a nervous fever, and confined for more than three months to my bed ; and throughout this illness, my affectionate nurse was made instrumental in leading me again to the path of peace.

Lucille was truly one of those who united in her character the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. She had no theological arguments ; she had no idea that the truths of the blessed

Bible were ever perverted or disbelieved. Its threatenings would blanch her cheek, but the promises, the sweet promises of the Saviour gleamed as precious stones on the breastplate of her faith and love.

Although so young, she had passed through the furnace of affliction, she had been placed under the Purifier's hand; and she came forth from the process reflecting the image of the Refiner.

“Ask first for submission, dear Emily,” she would say, “and then pray for comfort. You do not know the happiness, the sweet peace that will arise, if even in trembling you can say, ‘Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.’” And then the dear child, in her concern for my welfare, overcoming the natural diffidence of her dis-

position would kneel by my side, and pour forth her soul for me in the earnestness of prayer.

On one occasion, when I was very restless, in a low sweet voice, she lulled me to sleep with the following

HYMN.

Pray ! in thy childhood pray !
T will rest as dew upon the opening flower ;
T will rise, as fragrance on life's early day :
Sweet is the incense of the morning hour.

And sorrows yet may fall,
Before thy sun has gained the middle sky,
And clouds, and darkness, with their gloomy pall,
Around the path of infancy may lie.

Then gird thy soul in prayer !
T will fill the aching void of orphan woe,
And chase away the shadows of despair ;
Pray, and thy peace shall like a river flow !

Pray ! and thy God shall be
Thy hiding-place, in Sorrow's dreary night ;
Thy Rock of Refuge, thy o'ershadowing Tree ;
Thy Strength in weakness, in thy darkness Light !

“ Lucille,” I said, the first day that I was able to leave my room, “ Lucille, how can I ever thank you for all your kindness to me ?”

She looked at me in unaffected surprise, and with a smile brightening her innocent face, “ You cannot mean to thank me for my love,” she said, with much simplicity : “ for have you not given me in return your own sweet affection ?” “ For more than this, I thank you, my gentle one,” I answered ; “ I shall ever bless you for the faithfulness with which you pointed out to me how my rebel-will stood as a barrier between my soul and God.

“I now pray, that I may bow to the severest trial that comes from a Father’s hand ; and already half the weight of my anguish is removed. Now I can say from my own experience, that sorrow has its peculiar seasons of comfort, and that when lying lowly at the foot of the Cross, we are cheered by many a smile from the Man of Sorrows.”

I had never before spoken so unreservedly to Lucille. She looked earnestly at me for a moment, and then burst into tears.

“These are tears of thankfulness, dear Emily,” she said : “there is joy in heaven amongst the angels of God, when one sinner repenteth : and may I not rejoice too ?” she added with a bright smile ; “may I not bless Him, who has done such great things for you ?”

As she remained affectionately leaning on me, wrapped in deep thought, or engaged in silent prayer, I noticed for the first time, the transparent delicacy of her complexion, and the slender appearance of her fragile form. She had grown much during the last year. I thought of her languor, her shortness of breathing ; and symptoms, that appeared hitherto to have been unnoticed by us all, rushed on my agitated mind, and stood before me as so many harbingers of consumption. "Lucille," I said, "you are not well ; you have been exerting yourself too much for me :" and then, unguardedly giving way to the feelings that oppressed me, I told her I felt sure she would be taken from us, and that I should ere long, be left without the sweet boon of her love.

She looked tenderly at me. "Did not the Saviour say," she answered, "'If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, not my will, but thine be done ?' It is not to some peculiar sorrow that you must endeavour to submit, if you wish for peace ; but you must bow to the Father's will in all things."

"And do you really think you will be taken from us ?" I inquired. "Oh, yes ! for some months past," she answered, "I have felt that life was not for me ; and I think I would not wish it otherwise..."

It would take me far beyond the limits of this little tale, were I to dwell on the many conversations that passed between us at this time ; suffice it to say, that as the outward form decayed, the inner

spirit was renewed day by day. As the shadows of the tomb rose around this lovely child, the halo of faith illumined the darkness.

As winter approached, Lucille was confined to the house. A medical practitioner was called in, and her studies, he said, must be laid aside.

I think I see her now, with her Bible, her constant companion, in her hand, reclining on the sofa, her cheeks beautifully painted by the bright hectic of consumption.

“ So death beneath the rose-bud loves to smile,
And smiling blasts it.”

We all loved Lucille, and it was indeed an affecting sight, that lone creature on the couch of languishing, on the bed of

death, and not one relation near her ; not one message of love sent to ask concerning the sufferer.

Her grandmother's mind had altogether failed, and her guardian was abroad, and not expected to return till the spring. But not a murmur ever escaped the lips of this dear child of Jesus.

With the most exalted faith, she mixed an almost infantine simplicity of manner ; she had in truth received the gospel as a little child, and I do not think that the shadow of a doubt ever darkened her path.

I am convinced, that much of the uneasiness of the prospect of death, experienced by many high in the Christian world, arises from a want of entire dependence on the Saviour.

They do not see the full extent of their helplessness, and therefore they do not, as one of these little ones, rest for light, peace, joy, hope, and salvation, on the all-sufficiency of their Redeemer.

LUCILLE'S DYING HYMN.

I feel that I am dying ;
But He is by my side
Who trod the gloomy valley, —
He, who for sinners died.
A low and gentle whisper
Is sounding in mine ear,
“ Fear not, thou orphan trembler,
For I, thy God, am near.”

Death stands as king of terrors,
And shakes his bony crown ;
But I, in Christ, am victor,
I care not for his frown !
Yes — he, my Lord, is near me,
Jesus, the strong to save ;

Therefore thou hast not conquered,
O dark and silent grave !

He who through life has led me
Will not forsake me now ;
I twine faith's laurel garland
Around my dying brow ;
All fearless I go forward
To walk where thou hast trod,
In thee made perfect, Saviour !
My spirit pants for God.

Lucille rapidly lost her strength ; and it was a beautiful sight, as the last enemy approached, to see this fragile creature, endued with power from on high, looking, calmly and fearlessly, in the very face of the king of terrors.

“ My weakness, my helplessness, my insufficiency,” she said, “ do not terrify me ; they only cause me to enfold myself

yet more closely in the spotless garment of my Redeemer's righteousness." She spoke to all her companions of the preciousness of Christ ; then calling me to her she gave me her mother's picture. " Not one murmur" she softly said. " Keep this for my sake ; no one else will value it."

I think her last words were, " Lord, thou knowest that I love thee!" and then this lovely child, this desolate stranger, was called to her Father's home.

Her short life was over ; her quiet labour of love had been accomplished ; she had been the means of leading back one poor wanderer to the Saviour ; and now, in my deep sorrow, leaning on my God, I was enabled at last to say, " Not my will, but thine be done." Grief itself seemed

to wear a different aspect ; and the very clouds that overshadowed me, were bright with the hues of morning.

The gentle Lucille was soon forgotten. Except in my own breast, it seemed as though her memory had passed away from earth ; but I trust that her society proved a real blessing to me ; for now, though sorrowful, I was enabled to rejoice in my Saviour.

I had many solitary hours during my lonely holidays. Lucille's sweet voice was gone ; yet I could scarcely wish her back again ; for life, at best, is shadowy to an orphan ; and now she was at rest on her Saviour's bosom.

At the end of the next summer, I received a letter from my dear father,

telling me, that during the autumn, I was to leave England and return to my tropical home. Strong feelings of pleasure were mixed with softer memories, when I thought how soon I should again see my native land, the home of my happy, happy childhood.

Madame de Souffrain was soon busily engaged in getting ready my "outfit;" that is, she was purchasing for me an abundant supply of summer clothing; and ere the gloom of November had darkened the autumn landscape, I had bid adieu for ever to the instructors of my youth—to the spot where Lucille and I had taken sweet counsel together....

Who can look on the ocean and not see the hand of the Almighty on its restless surface? It was on the face of the

waters that the Spirit of the Creator moved ; and ever since that time, in storm and calm, the solemn deep has been, as it were, the hiding-place of his power.

We had pleasant weather, and favourable winds ; and at the end of six weeks, the blue mountain peak of Jamaica was in sight.

The sun was giving its parting boon of gold and crimson to the waters, when I again looked on the distant shores of my native land. Sad, yet softened recollection filled my heart as the morning of childhood rose before me. I thought of that dear parent whose guiding love was no longer to direct me on the intricate path of life, while the precious instructions of the gentle Lucille came into

my mind, and I was enabled calmly to say, "It is the Lord."

The next morning we were anchored in Kingston harbour, and, in a few moments, I was clasped in the embrace of my beloved father. We had been separated for nearly seven years, and only those West Indians who have been thus situated can enter into the feelings of my dear parent on this occasion. He wept like a child. I think I see him now, as pushing back the hair from my forehead, he told me, that my smile vividly brought to his recollection, my precious mother as in maiden loveliness he first beheld her.

Everything that affection could devise, was provided for my comfort in my pleasant home, and the welcome of the negro

servants to their “ young missis,” though expressed in their own peculiar way, was warm and affectionate. “ Hi !” exclaimed an old man whose head had grown silvery in our service. “ Him de same *maugre* pickney ? him tan handsome, for true.” “ My King !” said another, “ him worser dan him moder ;” by which mode of expression he intended to convey his idea of my superior beauty. “ Cho, see him laugh, an him teet tan like ibory.”

As for my old nurse, she was bathed in tears, and literally groaned out her joy. She clasped me in her arms : she pushed the cotton turban from her head, as if it impeded her sight as she gazed on me : she wrung her hands, and very loud was her *lamentation* of *happiness*. “ Now

me die happy ! poor ting, poor ting !
Look at him cheek, red like de pomegra-
nate, oh ! ah ! ooh !”

As my father was one of the leading people in society, we were much in public ; nevertheless I had many hours of retirement, and I sought for strength to enable me faithfully to perform my new duties, and for wisdom to steer my course aright through the perplexities that sometimes surrounded me.

White hairs had already scattered their snows on my father's temples ; and there was a look of anxiety on his pale face, and a restlessness in his manner, at times, that distressed me. Often would I playfully ask him to let me be the sharer of his troubled thoughts ; but he would

always make an excuse for his reserve, sometimes telling me that he had not heart to cloud the sunshine of my morning days.

He had ardently loved my mother, and he valued and respected the religious character ; and though he was very regular in his attendance at church, yet I feared that religion was only outside, whilst the heart remained untouched by a Saviour's love.

I felt the difficulty of speaking to him on the subject, lest it might give me the appearance of taking more on myself than was dutiful in a daughter ; but I poured out my soul to my God, and said, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" It was whilst thus engaged in prayer, that I

remembered the last evening I had spent with my dear mother beneath the shadowy Cotton-tree, her earnest entreaty, and the sacred promise I had given her.

It seemed but as yesterday—that solemn evening ! I only wondered that I had ever forgotten it : now it was brought back to my mind with such power, that the gate of duty was open before me.

My father had given me a beautiful black American horse ; and although living in a town, many were the pleasant rides we took together.

I soon persuaded my dear papa to accompany me to the beautiful Cotton-tree. We left our horses at the bottom of the gentle slope, and, ascending the well-remembered path, in a few moments we

were sitting on the very spot where I had so often held sweet converse with my sainted mother.

There was the same tranquil ocean, the same golden sun sinking in the west ; yet one frail flower was broken, and earth missed it not : she was gone, and her place was to know her no more.

That dear mother's life and death was for some time the theme of our conversation, till the realities of eternity stood so closely before me, that I could no longer be silent on the important subject.

“ O, my father,” I said, “ I had on this very spot many sweet conversations with my mother, and she spoke to me of a Saviour's love, and of the peace and happiness of that soul which was reconciled

to God through Christ : and it was under the shade of this old tree," I continued, "the very last evening that we were together, that she made me solemnly promise to speak to you of the blessed hopes of immortality—‘Tell him,’ she said, ‘to seek your mother’s God. Man can find no resting-place in this life, till the anchor of his soul is fixed on the Rock of ages.’"

My father listened in silent emotion. Again the evening star gleamed through the dark foliage, and I told him how my dear mother had predicted that as we thus conversed of sacred things, that very star should look upon us.

After continuing silent for some time, in a low voice, my dear father said,

“ Emily, our God has enabled you to be a faithful child to me. That dear mother being dead, yet speaketh ! We will meet here from time to time : and may we not feel, that as we speak together concerning the kingdom of God, that she is looking down on us ? ”

My father’s heart was softened, and we continually spent many a happy evening beneath the shade of this dear old tree. Often would my loved parent exclaim, “ Oh, what happiness I have lost ! oh that I had remembered my Creator in the days of my youth ! ”

As rain upon the thirsty ground, so did the precious truths of the gospel sink into his heart, and he was enabled to bring forth fruit to perfection.

He delighted to view the Saviour as One who was "acquainted with grief," as One with whom he might confidingly leave the burden of his care. Thus my mother's prayers were answered, the promise was fulfilled—"And it shall come to pass, that at eventide it shall be light."

But around my own heart the shadows of sorrow were again rising. My father's health rapidly declined; and yet we could see no outward sign of disease. It seemed as if the Angel of Death had silently put his hand on him; for, from day to day, he grew weaker, even as the grass withereth, as the flower fadeth at the appointed time, when no storm is in the heavens.

Change and country air were recommended; and Mr. Onslow, rector of the

Mountain Rock Chapel, sent us a pressing invitation to spend a few weeks at his quiet rectory.

We performed the journey by short and easy stages, travelling in the early morning, some time before sunrise, and again in the evening, when crimson twilight was in the west.

I had always felt that the sunset hour was a time for solemn reflection—a time when the still small voice of conscience, hushed by the stunning cares of day, would be heard ; a time when sorrow kept under control, as it were, whilst the world looked on, came forth again to meet us. And now, with my dear father at my side, looking at everything with the farewell glance which seemed to say, “ My

days on earth are numbered," I felt that endurance was not resignation ; and oh how earnestly I prayed for real conformity to the Divine Will !

I may say of my beloved parent, that his mind daily became imbued with the spirit of Him, whom he wished to serve. Not only did the beauties of nature attract his attention, for this had always been the case, but now every object mantled in heavenly thought, wore more than earthly beauty, and his observations expressed in power and simplicity, rested on my mind, with a strength which seemed to say : " Listen, for these lips will soon be silent in death."

I remember, at a beautiful winding of the river, passing through a shallow ford-

ing; and as we stopped for the refreshment of our weary horses, "Emily," my father said, "there is a stream whereof if we drink, we shall never thirst; even the river of living water which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

He then spoke to me of the unsatisfactory nature of earthly comfort in the hour of anxiety or sorrow. "It is like a cup of water," he observed, "to the weary traveller, reviving perhaps for a moment, only to make him feel afterwards more cruelly his thirst; but when the Holy Spirit, in his office of Comforter, rests on the soul, then it is that earth's cares sink to the bottom of the stream, and the peace of God refreshes the drooping heart.

At another part of the road, my father

stopped to look at one of those elegant parasitical plants that was hanging in rich beauty from the upper branches of a stately cedar-tree. Deriving strength and nourishment from its supporter, it put forth its crimson blossoms, which, by their loveliness attracted the attention of the passer by, and gave a sweet perfume to the shadowy air. "Is not this an emblem of the Christian?" my father said, "rooted and grounded in the Saviour. Left to himself for an instant, he would fall and wither and die; but, drawing every moment fresh supplies of grace and comfort from Jesus, his strength, and dwelling under the shadow of his love, with great delight, he brings forth fruit unto holiness, and all the world can see that he rests on his Saviour."

How consoling is the power of Divine Grace ! My father had been immersed in the perplexities of business, eating the bread of carefulness ; but now, with the same anxieties around him, he had found a resting-place ; the burden was left with one able to bear it ; and as the future was brought near to him by the glance of faith, present things sunk into comparative insignificance, and the sufferings of this present time seemed not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed.

The road to the rectory was picturesque in the extreme, in some places finding a way on the very brink of fearful precipices, and then again threading its mazy course through woods that had been but little intruded on by man.

The chapel was a modern building, situated, as its name would imply, amidst rocks, yet standing on a kindly spot of green land, that seemed to say, "All is not rugged ; there is no situation of life, however devoid of comfort, without some cause for thankfulness and praise."

Oh ! how happy I could now have been, had not the precarious state of my beloved father's health almost dashed the cup of enjoyment from my lips : I say, almost ; because there were moments so full of joyful hope, that I think I could at times cheerfully anticipate the summons that should call him home ; but the selfishness of strong earthly affection shut out too often the promised land from my view : and instead of dwelling on an everlasting

union in the presence of the Lamb, I could only think of my lonely lot, and of the desolation of my home, when the sunshine of his love should have departed from it.

Mr. Onslow's society was a real blessing to the dear invalid ; and sometimes when his strength would permit, he would attend even service at the chapel, mingling his feeble, but heartfelt notes of praise with the full peal of the deep-toned organ.

How well I remember the last evening of our visit to that pleasant spot, endeared to me for ever by so many hallowed memories.

The morning had been very stormy, and as the waves beat in impotent fury against the dark rock, my father spoke of the se-

curity of the believer, and of the Rock of his support, even Christ Jesus.

Now all was sunshine, bright joyous sunshine ! Even on the ocean there rested no memorial of the tempest. We paid our parting visit to the little school, and as we returned home by the chapel, we heard Mr. Onslow singing the following simple stanzas, accompanying himself by the softest notes of the organ.

When daylight wakes and the bells' sweet chime,
Proclaims the dawn of the Sabbath prime,
I hie me away to my peaceful flock,
To the chapel that smiles on the Mountain Rock.

Sweet is the breath of that morning hour,
And welcome the shade of that cool grey tower ;
The waves our quiet seem to mock,
As they spring in wild glee on our Mountain Rock.

Like the Saviour who went apart to pray,
On the green hill top at the close of day ;
So we with the staff of prayer will knock,
Till the living stream gush from our Mountain Rock.

And O, may the Shepherd of Israel bless,
The fold He hath placed in the wilderness !
Our lambs are safe from the tempest shock,
Whilst God is the strength of our Mountain Rock.

The melody was overpowering. "Thus it is," exclaimed my father, "that the love of Christ constraineth us. Men of talent leave the pathway of fame—men of ability give up all earthly advantages, for the Master they serve, and spend their lives, and find their happiness in telling these unlettered people of a Saviour's love."

We returned home, and my father lingered for three months. Throughout his

illness, he spoke with much pleasure of our conversations under my favourite tree; and died full of hope and confidence, that, through the merits of his Redeemer, he should be presented faultless before the Father's throne.

Years have passed since that time, and many a happy hour, and many a sweet conversation have I had with my own little ones, under the sheltering boughs of that dear old Cotton-tree.

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